

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
May 27, 2010

OCEAN BEACH MASTER PLAN

File No. 08-163-01
Project Manager: Moira McEnespy

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$300,000 to the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association to develop an Ocean Beach Master Plan.

LOCATION: Ocean Beach, City and County of San Francisco

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of up to \$300,000 (three hundred thousand dollars) to the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) to develop a Master Plan for Ocean Beach (Master Plan), City and County of San Francisco. This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, SPUR shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a final work program, schedule and budget; and the scopes of work and the roster of contractors to be employed in the project.
2. To the extent appropriate, SPUR shall ensure that the Master Plan is consistent with the Conservancy’s ‘Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development’ and shall incorporate the requirements of all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations and guidelines for disabled access into the Master Plan.
3. SPUR shall develop the Master Plan in consultation with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the City and County of San Francisco.
4. Conservancy funds shall not be disbursed toward implementation of any proposed pilot visitor-serving improvement projects, which will be solicited in tandem with the master planning process, unless:

- a. The Executive Officer determines that a proposed project is categorically or statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act and authorizes the project.
- b. The grantee provides documentation that the proposed project complies with the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA) and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Draft General Management Plan.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated by the Conservancy on June 4, 2009.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program, Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code regarding public access.
3. The San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association is a non-profit organization existing under 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$300,000 (three hundred thousand dollars) to the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) to develop a Master Plan for Ocean Beach (see proposed planning area in Exhibit 1).

Ocean Beach lies within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), along the west side of San Francisco. It is jointly owned and managed by the GGNRA (the beach) and the City and County of San Francisco (the road and parking). At five-miles long, it is one of the longest urban beaches in the country. Ocean Beach has the potential to become one of the most spectacular metropolitan beaches in the world, but currently suffers from erosion, neglect and a lack of amenities. Previous planning efforts have identified the need for a single document that integrates the requirements of the natural environment and green spaces, the desires of area residents, recreational opportunities, and the plans and expertise of the number of public agencies maintaining the area. There is also need for strategies that fully realize the beach and promenade as a grand civic space for both passive and active recreation, facilitate vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation, and leverage connections to the rest of the city, the GGNRA, Golden Gate Park, the San Francisco Zoo, Fort Funston, and Lake Merced. Finally, the effects of climate change on San Francisco’s coastline and wildlife need to be analyzed and incorporated into the planning effort.

The Master Plan will be a comprehensive and dynamic document with sustainability as the core thread, and will address the following elements: climate change and sea level rise; open space (beach, promenade, parks & streetscape, passive and active recreation); roadway (streets & parking); potential for development of renewable energy sources (wave, wind, tidal); beach erosion control and coastal protection (including seawall); protection and enhancement of natural resources (including habitat for special status species); concepts for signage, interpretive

features, lighting and public art; circulation (including east-west flow corridors); integration of related projects and plans that are being implemented by other entities; sustainability guidelines; management/maintenance structures and strategies; and implementation (budgets, funding and phasing).

The approximately two-year planning process will define baseline information and planning/design objectives and evaluation criteria for the open space, natural resources and infrastructure; develop initial concepts and scenarios; and refine the preferred alternative and summarize the effort into a Master Plan that includes design, technical, ecological, sustainability and cost information. The Plan will use a public process designed to build consensus and ensure momentum for Plan implementation. Development of the Plan will involve public and private stakeholders, including beach, ocean, environmental and disabled access advocates, as well as community-based organizations. The Plan will also account for the anticipated increase in number of visitors, as Ocean Beach becomes more “user friendly,” and will propose environmentally sustainable alternatives to improve beach access and amenities and enhance resources.

In addition, pilot projects to immediately improve visitor experiences and to inform the Master Plan at Ocean Beach will be solicited and implemented concurrent with the Master Planning process. For example, a pilot project may consist of testing the City’s Pavement to Parks program, in which areas of excess pavement are transformed to plaza or parks using moveable/reversible materials; data is collected on how well the transformation works before making it a permanent element. It is anticipated that these pilot projects, which some Conservancy funds under this authorization may seed, will be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). If not exempt, then the pilot project will be brought back to the Conservancy Board for authorization prior to its implementation.

SPUR is a long-standing organization formed in 1910 as the San Francisco Planning and Housing Association, and changed to SPUR in 1959. SPUR is a public policy “think tank” that seeks to promote good planning and good government through research, analysis, public education and advocacy. SPUR has extensive experience with planning, land use, transportation and economic issues in San Francisco, including revitalization of San Francisco as the Bay Area’s urban core. Although the Conservancy has not granted funds to SPUR in the past, the Conservancy is looking forward to developing a new collaborative relationship with SPUR.

Site Description: Ocean Beach lies within the GGNRA, along the west side of San Francisco. It is jointly owned and managed by the GGNRA (the beach) and the City and County of San Francisco (the road and parking). At five-miles long, it is one of the longest urban beaches in the country. The specific Master Plan project area is bounded by Golden Gate Park and residential areas to the East, Fort Funston to the South and cliffs to the North (see Exhibit 1). Even with its current lack of amenities, Ocean Beach is annually visited by as many as two million people for activities such as walking, picnicking, jogging, dog walking, surfing and fishing.

Project History: In 2000, residents, businesses, government entities and community-based organizations came together to coordinate the activities of the many government agencies involved in the Ocean Beach area, as well as develop an active grassroots movement to support its revitalization and protection. This group identified the need for a single document that integrates the requirements of the natural environment and green spaces, the desires of area residents, recreational opportunities, as well as the plans and expertise of the number of public agencies maintaining the area. Thus, in early 2008, Mayor Gavin Newsom created the Ocean

Beach Vision Council, whose main task is to create a Master Plan for revitalizing Ocean Beach. The proposed project will build upon the work of the Ocean Beach Vision Council.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$300,000
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	100,000
GGNRA	<u>10,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$410,000

Conservancy funds are anticipated to come from the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 funds may be used for the purposes of promoting access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the State in accordance with the provisions of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. In addition, Proposition 84 funds may be utilized to finance planning necessary for the successful design, selection, and implementation of such projects. Consistent with the purposes of Proposition 84, the proposed project will be undertaken pursuant to the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code), and will consist of planning necessary to improve access to and visitor-serving amenities at Ocean Beach in the City and County of San Francisco.

The GGNRA has agreed to commit a match of \$10,000 for this project, and the SFPUC intends to authorize a match of \$100,000 at its April 27, 2010 meeting. In addition, in-kind contributions of staff time will be made by members of the Vision Council and other stakeholders, and by technical advisors whose expertise will be tapped as part of the planning process. These in-kind contributions are estimated to be worth \$75,000.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, sections 31160 *et seq.* regarding San Francisco Bay projects.

Pursuant to Section 31162, the Conservancy may award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that help to achieve various specific goals, including the goals of increasing public access to the coast, protecting natural habitats and open space resources of regional importance, and promoting projects that provide open space and natural areas accessible to urban populations for recreational purposes. The proposed project is located entirely within San Francisco County, one of the designated nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Consistent with Section 31162(a), the proposed project will plan for improved public access to the coast, improved connection of population centers to the coast, and will create a master plan for the Ocean Beach area. The proposed project will not have a significant adverse effect on agricultural operations, environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife; in fact, the resulting plan will seek to better protect environmentally sensitive habitat areas and wildlife.

Consistent with Section 31162(b), the proposed project will plan for increased protection of natural habitats, scenic areas and open-space resources of regional importance in the Ocean Beach area.

Consistent with Section 31162(d), the proposed project will plan for increased accessibility of the Ocean Beach area to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes.

In addition, the proposed project satisfies criteria for determining project priority under Section 31163(c), as follows: (1) the proposed project is multijurisdictional (the Ocean Beach planning area is jointly owned and managed by the NPS as part of the GGNRA and the City and County of San Francisco) and will serve a regional consistency (the City and County of San Francisco and the GGNRA receive over two million visitors annually, locally to internationally); (2) the proposed project will be implemented in a timely way (anticipated to start immediately and be complete within nine months); (3), the proposed project will include matching funds from other sources (City and County of San Francisco, GGNRA); and (4) the project is fully consistent with and supported by adopted local plans, as described in the “Consistency with Local Coastal Program Policies” section, below.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective A** of the Conservancy’s 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will develop a plan that provides for recreational opportunities.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on June 4, 2009, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy’s statutory programs and purposes:** See the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation” section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The proposed project is supported by Senator Dianne Feinstein, State Senator Leland Yee (District 8), State Assemblymember Fiona Ma (District 12), Supervisors Eric Mar (District 1) and Carmen Chu (District 4), San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, The Neighborhood Parks Council and others. Please see letters in Exhibit 2 (note that most letters were written prior to it being determined that SPUR would be the grant applicant, so they reference the Ocean Beach Vision Council (created in 2008 by Mayor Newsom; see the “Project History” section) rather than SPUR).
4. **Location:** The proposed project would be located on the Pacific Coast waterfront of the City and County of San Francisco, which is within the nine-county Bay Area.
5. **Need:** Absent Conservancy funds, the proposed project would not occur.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** Located within the City and County of San Francisco and the GGNRA, Ocean Beach receives over two million visitors annually, from local to international origin.

7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The proposed project will address climate change, including sea level rise scenarios, as part of the Master Planning process.

Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** Winter storms in December 2009 and January 2010 have eroded between 30 and 70 feet of bluff along Ocean Beach, affecting the Great Highway, the Lake Merced Wastewater Tunnel and the Southwest Ocean Outfall Pipe. Emergency repairs were conducted, but a long-term solution needs to be determined as soon as possible, and should be developed consistent with an overall Master Plan.
9. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The proposed project will develop a plan to address the following elements: climate change and sea level rise; open space (beach, promenade, parks & streetscape, passive and active recreation); roadway (streets & parking); potential for development of renewable energy sources (wave, wind, tidal); beach erosion control and coastal protection (including seawall); protection and enhancement of natural resources (including habitat for special status species); concepts for signage, interpretive features, lighting and public art; circulation (including east-west flow corridors); integration of related projects and plans that are being implemented by other entities; sustainability guidelines; management/maintenance structures and strategies; and implementation (budgets, funding and phasing).
10. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
11. **Conflict resolution:** The proposed project will incorporate a transparent, public process designed to seek input from all stakeholders and the public, and to build consensus.
12. **Readiness:** The proposed project will commence as soon as funds are authorized, and will be completed within two years.
13. **Cooperation:** The proposed project will build upon and continue to incorporate the work of several stakeholder and City-formed groups (e.g., the Ocean Beach Vision Council, established by the Mayor in early 2008).

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The proposed project is consistent with the applicable policies contained in the land use plan portion of the City and County of San Francisco’s certified Local Coastal Program (certified March 14, 1986), namely the *Western Shoreline Plan: A Part of the Master Plan of the City and County of San Francisco* (adopted by the San Francisco City Planning Commission by Resolution No. 10289 on April 18, 1985).

The Western Shoreline Plan covers a six-mile area from the Point Lobos recreational area in the north to the Fort Funston cliff area in the south, and includes Lake Merced, the San Francisco Zoo, Ocean Beach, the Great Highway, Golden Gate Park, and the Sutro Heights Park and Sutro Baths. Much of this planning area will be within the scope of the Ocean Beach Master Plan, which is consistent with the following Western Shoreline Plan policies:

Consistent with “Transportation” Policies 1 and 2, the proposed project will seek to improve east-west public transit connections to Ocean Beach, and improve connections amongst the coastal recreation destinations (e.g., the zoo, etc).

Consistent with “The Great Highway” Policy 4, the proposed project will seek to provide for a continuous Class 1 bicycle trail; consistent with Policy 6, the proposed project will seek to improve public access to Ocean Beach from Golden Gate Park; consistent with Policies 7-8, the proposed project will seek to address safe and flexible parking areas; consistent with Policies 9-11, the proposed project will seek to improve pedestrian safety at crossings and parking areas.

Consistent with the “Golden Gate Park” Objective (No. 3), the proposed project will seek to enhance the recreational connection between Golden Gate Park and the beach frontage by strengthening visual and physical connections.

Consistent with “The Zoo” Objective (No. 4), the proposed project will seek to improve the quality of the zoo’s relationship to the coastal zone recreational system.

Consistent with the “Ocean Beach” Objective (No. 6), the proposed project will seek to maintain and enhance the recreational use of the Ocean Beach shoreline. Consistent with Policies 1 and 2, the proposed project will seek to continue and maintain the beach’s natural areas; consistent with Policies No. 3-4, the proposed project will seek to maintain and improve the beach’s natural appearance and physical condition; consistent with Policy No. 5, the proposed project will seek to enhance the enjoyment of visitors by providing for convenient visitor-oriented services.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed master planning project is statutorily and categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under two sections of 14 Cal. Code of Regulations. The proposed master planning activities are statutorily exempt pursuant to Section 15262 in that they will involve feasibility and planning analysis for possible future action that has not yet been adopted, approved or funded and they will include consideration of environmental factors. The master planning activities are likewise categorically exempt under §15306 to the extent that they involve basic data collection and resource evaluation activities.

The proposed pilot projects to immediately improve visitor experiences and to inform the master planning process will be funded under the proposed authorization only if the Executive Officer determines that the projects are statutorily or categorically exempt from CEQA (the authority for which the Conservancy previously delegated to the Executive Officer). Any other pilot project will be brought back to the Conservancy for authorization and consideration of required environmental documentation under CEQA prior to implementation with Conservancy funds.

Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.